

Summer 2004

NHCSW



New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women

Message from the Executive Director

I'm sitting in my office, way behind in writing my executive director's message for the summer newsletter. Truth be told, this was supposed to be the spring newsletter, but it's been a busy couple of months, with stellar attendance at the Women & Money Conference and a two-day weekender with 56 middle-school girls at Girls Connect. Nevertheless, the newsletter has been complete for at least a month, sitting on my desk, getting pushed aside, the blank space where my message should be reminding me it soon will be summer.

The blank space. I knew, even in the midst of all the successful programs the Commission accomplished this spring, that summer

would be bittersweet. Colleen Heffernan, the Commission's program assistant, will leave us in the coming weeks to pursue a graduate degree in public policy at the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

It's gratifying to know that Colleen's future will strengthen and develop the work she began here at the Commission. Yet, when I try to imagine the Commission without her keen competence, my workday without her subtle sensitivity to the needs of those around her, I can't help but come up blank.

Right now, Colleen quietly sits in an easy chair by my desk, reviewing the re-

sumes we've received for her "replacement." I'll read this to her when I'm finished, probably for the first time letting the expression on my face show how much I'll miss her, how much she means to the Commission.

Soon, someone new will sit in Colleen's chair, not to replace or to replicate, but to reinvent the program assistant position and, like Colleen, become a member of the evolving sisterhood called the Commission, where, like all good families, you're empowered to grow, encouraged to wander, expected to succeed. And always, always, always, welcomed home.

*Theresa de Langis, Ph.D.
Executive Director*

New Hampshire Women & Money Conference

In partnership with the State Treasurer, the Commission hosted a free daylong financial education program designed for New Hampshire residents of all ages, income levels, and financial skill. Over 600 participants, presenters, volunteers and staff filled Southern New Hampshire University's Manchester campus on May 14, 2004. Keynote speaker, Boston-based author Dee Lee, is well known for her talent

at mixing economics and empowerment. The conference also included a series of interactive workshops on budgeting, credit and debt management, home ownership, estate planning, insurance and risk management, retirement planning, investment strategies, identity theft, and kids and money. A day-long conference expo featured exhibit booths from conference supporters and other public

and private entities representing a broad range of financial and educational services. The Commission thanks the 13 member steering committee and the major supporters, Fleet Bank, Bank of NH, Citizens Bank and Fidelity. Also, the Commission thanks the Women's Business Center for serving as the conference fiscal agent. Visit the Commission website to view conference pictures.

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New!
**The Women & Money
Workbook**
www.nh.gov/csw

New Hampshire Women & Girls

2004 Athletic Academic Awards

This past February, the Commission honored 566 female student-athletes at the 17th annual **High School Women's Athletic Academic Awards** at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord. Each woman had to meet the established criteria in order to receive the award. They must attend a New Hampshire high school, hold a B+ GPA, letter in two varsity sports and be a current athlete in both sports, and serve as a positive role model to peers by participating in community service activities. Executive Councilor Spaulding read Governor Benson's 2004 Girls and Women in Sports Day proclamation. The keynote address was given by Commissioner and Attorney Linda Johnson. Her inspiring speech focused on Title IX and the opportunities available to women in sports today.

2004 New Hampshire Girls Connect

The New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women, in partnership with FIRST, Girls Inc. of New Hampshire, Girl Scouts of Swift Water Council, the Robot Chicks Union, Granite State Independent Living, and the YWCA of Manchester, hosted the second annual **New Hampshire Girls Connect** May 22-23, 2004 at FIRST Place in Manchester, NH. 56 middle-school age girls from around the state participated in the workshop. Workshop participants learned how to build and program a computerized LEGO robot, with the assistance of peer coaches, professional engineers and other adult mentors. It is the hope of the Girls Connect partners that the workshop participants are encouraged to pursue their interest in math, science, and technology. Visit www.nh.go/csw for photos of the day.

New Hampshire Girls Connect!



PLEASE CONTACT THE NHCSW
OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON UPCOMING EVENTS

New Hampshire Women's Political Network

Last October, the Commission partnered with the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston for the **New England Women's Political Summit**. Over forty New Hampshire women attended the Summit, and everyone returned to the state ready to come together and create a network for women interested in becoming involved in politics and public policy on both a state and federal level. The Commission, along with the partnership of the Women's Fund of NH, the NH Women's Policy Institute, and the NH Women's

Lobby, immediately organized a Summit follow-up gathering with participants from the October event and others interested in the initiative. We began by processing and prioritizing the goals set at the Summit, and moved forward by setting our own goals for the upcoming years. The first meeting ended with a list of six major goals for the group, including strategies and next steps. Since that first meeting, the group has met thrice more and has formally become the **New Hampshire Women's Political Network**. The Political Network is

made up of a myriad of different women including activists, lobbyists, attorneys, and legislators. All have come together to create a supportive network for those interested in running for office, becoming involved with policy making, or creating positive change through activism or lobbying. Please visit the Commission's website to view the minutes from each Political Network meeting and to view the next meeting date. All are welcome to attend. Additional information can be found on the Women's Fund of NH website at www.wfnh.org.

The Women of NHCSW

Lillye Ramos-Spooner received the 2004 Martin Luther King Day Award. Lillye has been advocating for immigrant women and families since the 1970s, and currently is the Director of Operations for The Greater Manchester AIDS Project.

Marie Metoyer, M.D. received the Minority Health Coalition Award. Marie is a retired psychiatrist who has devoted her life to increasing the availability of mental health services to under-served populations throughout the state.

Charlotte Woods, former Commissioner and community activist, past away recently at her Dover home. Ms. Woods was the first African-American woman to serve on the Commission and served from 1980 to 1984. Her contributions to the state will not be forgotten.

Commissioner Spotlight

The Commission is comprised of 15 members who are appointed by the Governor and Executive Council. Members are non-salaried and serve a maximum of two, three year terms.

Marie Metoyer, M.D.

Marie Metoyer, Manchester, has served on the Commission since April of 1999. Dr. Metoyer first became involved in women's issues as a first year student in medical school when a senior medical professor questioned her student status and accused her of "taking the place of a man" at the university. She was first inspired to work on behalf of women by her mother, Dr. Lena Edwards. This African-American obstetrician-gynecologist and mother of six children had received the Presidential Freedom



Dr. Marie Metoyer

Medal from President Johnson in 1964 for founding a maternity hospital for migrant workers in Amarillo, Texas. During her time as a Commissioner, there has been an increased awareness of pay inequities and of non-traditional types of employment for women, and more recognition of the accomplishments of minority women. When asked how serving on the Commission has affected her personally, Dr. Metoyer replied, "Being a Commissioner has enriched my life by permitting me to be part of a cadre of proactive women who struggle for women's political and socioeconomic equality."

Elizabeth Corell

Elizabeth Corell, Concord, has served on the Commission since October of 1998. She was appointed Commission



Elizabeth Corell

Vice Chair by Governor Craig Benson in 2003. A past member of Leadership New Hampshire and the New Hampshire Women's Lobby, Ms. Corell was inspired to work on behalf of women by her mother. "My mother taught me three things—to be self sufficient, to stay in touch with my family, and to learn the art of compromise." She first became involved in women's issues after graduating college and moving to New Hampshire. "When I came to New Hampshire, many other women were questioning and exploring as well. I joined a consciousness raising group and aligned with feminist views." When asked how serving on the Commission has affected her personally, Ms. Corell replied, "Over the past five years, I have been honored to work with women of compassion with phenomenal talents and commitment to effect positive change for all women in New Hampshire. It has been a humbling and enlightening experience."

NHCSW Resources

2004 Legal Handbook for Women in New Hampshire

The Commission recently updated and published our *Legal Handbook*. The Handbook is designed to provide the women of the state with information about state and federal laws related to education, employment, housing, sexual violence, family law and criminal law. It was updated to give the state's women and families the most recent laws and information relevant to their individual situations. Contributors to the Handbook in-

cluded members of the Commission, attorneys, Commission for Human Rights, Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Department of Education, and District and Superior Courts. The updated Handbook, two years in the making, also includes information on issues relevant to immigrant women, to which the Southern New Hampshire Area Health Education Center, the Inter-

national Institute of New Hampshire, the Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services and Latin American Center made contributions.

While the handbook may contain answers to legal questions, it is not a complete guide to the law, and it will not replace the services of a lawyer. Rather, the Handbook provides basic knowledge of the law, and serves as a starting point for women who need to take legal action for themselves and their families. Please contact the Commission or visit our web site to obtain a copy.

VIEW AND DOWNLOAD ALL
NHCSW RESOURCES AT
WWW.NH.GOV/CSW

Partners

We would like to thank the following people for their dedication to the women and girls of New Hampshire:

The New Hampshire Department of Justice
You're Fired! Paint-Your-Own-Pottery Studio
Commissioner Bonnie White
The Law Offices of Rath, Young and Pignatelli
Fleet Bank
Bank of New Hampshire

Citizens Bank
Fidelity Investments
Providian Financial
NH International Society for Technology and Education
MTS Services
YWCA of Manchester
BAE Systems
Access Sports Medicine and Orthopedics
Carriage Towne News

Catholic Medical Center
Coca Cola Bottlers
Franklin Savings Bank
Jefferson Pilot Financial
Laconia Savings Bank
Zonta Clubs of Concord and the Lakes Region

Donations to the NHCSW are tax deductible. Please contact the Commission office for more information.



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New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women

A Commission that works

On behalf of the diverse population
of the state's women

To provide a voice of advocacy
in legislative and public policy issues

To remedy historical and institutional
gender discrimination

To enhance opportunities in education and
training, business and employment

To honor the achievements of
New Hampshire women.

*Strengthening the State,
Empowering New Hampshire Women*

www.nh.gov/csw

**For an electronic subscription, please contact the
Commission office:
603.271.2660
cmswweb@nh.gov**

2004 Legislative Agenda

The Commission followed many bills through the House and the Senate this past Legislative session. Some were killed in the early stages, and some made it to the Governor's desk. Below is one of the bills the Commission supported. While this bill was voted down, it is still an important issue to the Commission and to the women and girls of New Hampshire.

HB 1278: Relative to the applicable minimum wage for hourly employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Keans, Norelli, Seldin, Lasky, Quandt, Foster, D'Allesandro, and Senators Larsen and Estabrook.

Currently, New Hampshire's minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour. This bill would increase the minimum wage for the next three years. On and after July 1,

2004, it would have become \$5.65. On and after July 1, 2005, it would have become \$6.15. On and after July 1, 2006, it would have become \$6.65.

In a compromise between the bill's sponsors and the House Labor Commission, the bill was amended to raise the current minimum wage to \$6.00 per hour while simultaneously setting up a study committee to analyze the impact of the raise on businesses. After a 10 to 9 vote in the committee to kill the bill, the full House was evenly split in its vote on March 11 on whether to kill the bill or pass it onto the Senate. House Speaker Chandler broke the tie, resulting in a 173 to 172 vote to kill the bill.

While this was a disappointment for the Commission and other organizations supporting this legislation, it was the beginning to a now ongoing conversation regarding poverty and its relation to minimum wage and the women and families of New Hampshire.

Most of our neighbor states have raised the minimum wage above the federal rate, and the governor of Maine has endorsed raising the minimum wage there to \$6.25. This leaves New Hampshire the only New England state whose minimum wage is not above the federal level. A recent study shows that in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment in most areas of the state, workers must earn at least \$16.49 per hour.

According to national statistics, sixty percent of workers in minimum- and low-wage jobs are adult women, and 40 percent of these are the sole breadwinners for their families. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2001, 23.5 percent of New Hampshire families in female-headed households with children under the age of 18 lived in poverty.

*Please contact the Commission office
for more information relating to the
minimum wage in New Hampshire.*